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## NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE AND FEE(S) DUE

7590

11/16/2009

Themis Anagnos  
1155 Rose  
Lake Zurich, IL 60047

EXAMINER

SANDY, ROBERT JOHN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3677

DATE MAILED: 11/16/2009

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/692,828	10/24/2003	Daniel James Dickinson	TE9A; P025A	9259

TITLE OF INVENTION: FASTENER WITH ERGONOMIC REMOVAL TO INSERTION FORCE RATION

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	YES	\$755	\$300	\$0	\$1055	02/16/2010

THE APPLICATION IDENTIFIED ABOVE HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND IS ALLOWED FOR ISSUANCE AS A PATENT. **PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS CLOSED.** THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS. THIS APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO WITHDRAWAL FROM ISSUE AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE OFFICE OR UPON PETITION BY THE APPLICANT. SEE 37 CFR 1.313 AND MPEP 1308.

THE ISSUE FEE AND PUBLICATION FEE (IF REQUIRED) MUST BE PAID WITHIN **THREE MONTHS** FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS NOTICE OR THIS APPLICATION SHALL BE REGARDED AS ABANDONED. **THIS STATUTORY PERIOD CANNOT BE EXTENDED.** SEE 35 U.S.C. 151. THE ISSUE FEE DUE INDICATED ABOVE DOES NOT REFLECT A CREDIT FOR ANY PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE IN THIS APPLICATION. IF AN ISSUE FEE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN PAID IN THIS APPLICATION (AS SHOWN ABOVE), THE RETURN OF PART B OF THIS FORM WILL BE CONSIDERED A REQUEST TO REAPPLY THE PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE TOWARD THE ISSUE FEE NOW DUE.

## HOW TO REPLY TO THIS NOTICE:

I. Review the SMALL ENTITY status shown above.

If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as YES, verify your current SMALL ENTITY status:

A. If the status is the same, pay the TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above.

B. If the status above is to be removed, check box 5b on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and twice the amount of the ISSUE FEE shown above, or

If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as NO:

A. Pay TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above, or

B. If applicant claimed SMALL ENTITY status before, or is now claiming SMALL ENTITY status, check box 5a on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and 1/2 the ISSUE FEE shown above.

II. PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, or its equivalent, must be completed and returned to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) with your ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). If you are charging the fee(s) to your deposit account, section "4b" of Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal should be completed and an extra copy of the form should be submitted. If an equivalent of Part B is filed, a request to reapply a previously paid issue fee must be clearly made, and delays in processing may occur due to the difficulty in recognizing the paper as an equivalent of Part B.

III. All communications regarding this application must give the application number. Please direct all communications prior to issuance to Mail Stop ISSUE FEE unless advised to the contrary.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Utility patents issuing on applications filed on or after Dec. 12, 1980 may require payment of maintenance fees. It is patentee's responsibility to ensure timely payment of maintenance fees when due.

# **PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL**

**Complete and send this form, together with applicable fee(s), to:** Mail **Mail Stop ISSUE FEE**  
**Commissioner for Patents**  
**P.O. Box 1450**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450**  
 or Fax **(571)-273-2885**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS (Note: Use Block 1 for any change of address)

Note: A certificate of mailing can only be used for domestic mailings of the Fee(s) Transmittal. This certificate cannot be used for any other accompanying papers. Each additional paper, such as an assignment or formal drawing, must have its own certificate of mailing or transmission.

7590 11/16/2009

Themis Anagnos  
 1155 Rose  
 Lake Zurich, IL 60047

## **Certificate of Mailing or Transmission**

I hereby certify that this Fee(s) Transmittal is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop ISSUE FEE address above, or being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO (571) 273-2885, on the date indicated below.

(Depositor's name)
(Signature)
(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/692,828 10/24/2003

Daniel James Dickinson

TE9A; P025A

9259

TITLE OF INVENTION: FASTENER WITH ERGONOMIC REMOVAL TO INSERTION FORCE RATION

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	YES	\$755	\$300	\$0	\$1055	02/16/2010

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
SANDY, ROBERT JOHN	3677	024-294000

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).

☐ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.

☐ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/47; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. Use of a **Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list

- (1) the names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively, 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) the name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed. 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.11. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE

(B) RESIDENCE: (CITY AND STATE OR COUNTRY)

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent): ☐ Individual ☐ Corporation or other private group entity ☐ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:

- ☐ Issue Fee
- ☐ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)
- ☐ Advance Order - # of Copies \_\_\_\_\_

4b. Payment of Fee(s): (Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above)

- ☐ A check is enclosed.
- ☐ Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.
- ☐ The Director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. Change in Entity Status (from status indicated above)

- ☐ a. Applicant claims SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27. ☐ b. Applicant is no longer claiming SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27(g)(2).

NOTE: The Issue Fee and Publication Fee (if required) will not be accepted from anyone other than the applicant; a registered attorney or agent; or the assignee or other party in interest as shown by the records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Typed or printed name \_\_\_\_\_ Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.311. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450.

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7590 11/16/2009			EXAMINER	
Themis Anagnos 1155 Rose Lake Zurich, IL 60047			SANDY, ROBERT JOHN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

3677

DATE MAILED: 11/16/2009

## Determination of Patent Term Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b) (application filed on or after May 29, 2000)

The Patent Term Adjustment to date is 0 day(s). If the issue fee is paid on the date that is three months after the mailing date of this notice and the patent issues on the Tuesday before the date that is 28 weeks (six and a half months) after the mailing date of this notice, the Patent Term Adjustment will be 0 day(s).

If a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) was filed in the above-identified application, the filing date that determines Patent Term Adjustment is the filing date of the most recent CPA.

Applicant will be able to obtain more detailed information by accessing the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) WEB site (<http://pair.uspto.gov>).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Customer Service Center of the Office of Patent Publication at 1-(888)-786-0101 or (571)-272-4200.

# Notice of Allowability

## Application No.

10/692,828

## Examiner

Robert J. Sandy

## Applicant(s)

DICKINSON ET AL.

## Art Unit

3677

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the amendment filed on 07/29/2009 and the attached Examiner's Amendment.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-17, 20-31, 33-41, 44-55, 58-69 and 72-100.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

## Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_.

### EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Themis Anagos (Reg. No. 47,388) on 29 October 2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claims 1, 11, 33, 38, 47, 52, 61, 66, 75 and 76 have been amended as follows:

1 (amended). A spring fastener comprising: a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure, a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected, a first engagement spring, connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs having second front ends, and a second engagement spring, connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, each of the first and second engagement springs having a substantially flat engagement region with a hindrance portion, the hindrance portion comprising one to three ripples, each ripple having the form of a depression on said hindrance portion, the depression having a deepest part, a front side, a back side and a width, and the hindrance portion having a surface, wherein the depth of each ripple is the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the respective ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness.

wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, flexible, and bent at its respective front end.

11 (amended). A spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure having a cavity between the first side and the second side,

a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected, and a top portion, the first side comprising first barbs having first front ends, and

a first engagement spring, the first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs having second front ends, and

a second engagement spring, the second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion,

each of the first and second engagement springs having a free end in the vicinity of the top portion,

each spring also comprising a peak and an engagement region with a hindrance portion between the free end and the peak, the hindrance portion comprising only one ripple having the form of a depression, the depression having a deepest part, a back side substantially lacking a front side, and a width, the hindrance portion further having a surface, wherein the depth of the ripple is the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness, said ripple providing increased removal force, when the fastener is pulled by an extension of a first part engaged to the first and second barbs, after the fastener has been inserted into a slot of a second part, the slot having a slot width and edges on which edges the engagement region is engaged, the increased removal force being due to the hindrance portion, and wherein the fastener can be extracted when pulled by the extension without damage to said fastener.

33 (amended). An assembly of a first part, the first part comprising an extension and a spring fastener, the spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure,

a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected, and

a first engagement spring; connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs, the first and second barbs engaging the extension of the first part, second front ends, and

a second engagement spring, connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion,

each of the first and second engagement springs having a free end in the vicinity of the top portion, each spring also comprising a peak and a substantially flat engagement region with a hindrance portion comprising one to three ripples, each ripple having the form of a depression on said hindrance portion, the depression having a deepest part, a front side, a back side and a width, and the hindrance portion having a surface, wherein the depth of each ripple is the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the respective ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness;

wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.

38 (amended). An assembly of a first part, the first part comprising an extension and a spring fastener, the spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure having a cavity between the first side and the second side, in which cavity the rib of the first part is disposed, a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected, and a top portion, the first side comprising first barbs having first front ends, and a first engagement spring, the first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs, the first and second barbs engaging the extension of the first part, second front ends, and a second engagement spring, the second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, each of the first and second engagement springs having a free end in the vicinity of the top portion, each spring also comprising a peak and an engagement region with a hindrance portion between the free end and the peak, the hindrance portion comprising only one ripple having the form of a depression, the depression having a deepest part, a back side, substantially lacking a front side, and a width, the hindrance portion further having a surface, wherein the depth of each ripple is

the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the respective ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness, said ripple provides increased removal force, when the fastener is pulled by an extension of a first part engaged to the first and second barbs, after the fastener has been inserted into a slot of a second part, the slot having a slot width and edges on which edges the engagement region is engaged, the increased removal force being due to the hindrance portion, and wherein the fastener can be extracted when pulled by the extension without damage to said fastener,

wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.

47 (amended). An assembly of a second part, the second part having a slot, and a spring fastener, the spring fastener inserted into the slot, the spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure,

a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected,

a first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs having second front ends, and

a second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion,

each of the first and second engagement springs having a substantially flat engagement region with a hindrance portion, the hindrance portion comprising one to three ripples, each ripple having the form of a depression on said hindrance portion, the depression having a deepest part, a front side, a back side and a width, and the hindrance portion having a surface, wherein the depth of each ripple is the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the respective ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness,

wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.



52 (amended). An assembly of a second part, the second part having a slot, and a spring fastener, the spring fastener inserted into the slot, the spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure having a cavity between the first side and the second side, in which cavity the rib of the first part is disposed, a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected, and a top portion, the first side comprising first barbs having first front ends, and a first engagement spring, the first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs having second front ends, and a second engagement spring, the second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, each of the first and second engagement springs having a free end in the vicinity of the top portion, each spring also comprising a peak and an engagement region with a hindrance portion between the free end and the peak, the hindrance portion comprising only one ripple having the form of a depression, the depression having a deepest part, a back side, substantially lacking a front side, and a width, the hindrance portion further having a surface, wherein the depth of each ripple is the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the respective ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness, said ripple provides increased removal force, when the fastener is pulled by an extension of a first part engaged to the first and second barbs, after the fastener has been inserted into a slot of a second part, the slot having a slot width and edges on which edges the engagement region is engaged, the increased removal force being due to the hindrance portion, and wherein the fastener can be extracted when pulled by the extension without damage to said fastener,

wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.

61 (amended). A vehicle comprising an assembly of a first part, the first part comprising an extension, and a second part, the second part having a slot, the first part and the second part connected with a spring fastener, the spring fastener inserted into the slot, the spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the

second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure, a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected,

a first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs, the first and second barbs engaging the extension of the first part, second front ends, and

a second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion,

each of the first and second engagement springs having a substantially flat engagement region with a hindrance portion, the hindrance portion comprising one to three ripples, each ripple having the form of a depression on said hindrance portion, the depression having a deepest part, a front side, a back side and a width, and the hindrance portion having a surface, wherein the depth of each ripple is the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the respective ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness.

wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.

66 (amended). A vehicle comprising an assembly of a first part, the first part comprising an extension, and a second part, the second part having a slot, the first part and the second part connected with a spring fastener, the spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure having a cavity between the first side and the second side, a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected, and a top portion, the first side comprising first barbs having first front ends, and a first engagement spring, the first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs having second front ends, and a second engagement spring, the second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, each of the first and second engagement springs having a free end in the vicinity of the top portion, each spring also comprising a peak and an engagement region with a hindrance portion between the free end and the peak, the hindrance portion comprising only one ripple having the form of a depression, the

depression having a deepest part, a back side substantially lacking a front side, and a width, the hindrance portion further having a surface, wherein the depth of the ripple is the distance between the surface of the hindrance portion and the deepest part of the ripple, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness, said ripple providing increased removal force, when the fastener is pulled by an extension of a first part engaged to the first and second barbs, after the fastener has been inserted into a slot of a second part, the slot having a slot width and edges on which edges the engagement region is engaged, the increased removal force being due to the hindrance portion, and

wherein the fastener can be extracted when pulled by the extension without damage to said fastener wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.

75 (amended). A spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure,

a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected,

a first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion, the second side comprising second barbs second front ends, and

a second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion,

each of the first and second engagement springs having an engagement region with a hindrance portion, the hindrance portion comprising one structure selected from the group consisting of a ripple, a side rib, an upward solid bent extension parallel to the peak and the free end, a knurled region, each having a depth, and a combination thereof, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness;

wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.

76 (amended) A vehicle comprising parts connected with a spring fastener, the spring fastener comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side, the first side connected to the second side thereby forming a U-shaped structure,

a bottom portion wherein the first side and the second side are connected,  
a first engagement spring connected to the first side in the vicinity of the bottom portion,  
the second side comprising second barbs second front ends, and  
a second engagement spring connected to the second side in the vicinity of the bottom portion,  
each of the first and second engagement springs having an engagement region with a hindrance portion between the free end, and the peak, the hindrance portion comprising one structure selected from the group consisting of a ripple, a side rib, an upward solid bent extension parallel to the peak and the free end, a knurled region, each having a depth, and a combination thereof, thereby resulting in the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness;  
wherein at least one barb is cut from its respective side, is flexible, and is bent at its respective front end.

#### **REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE**

The indication of allowed claims 1,3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 22, 26, 27, 33-41,44-55, 58-69, 72-78 and 83- 100, and the indication of allowability of claims 20, 21,23, 24, 28, 29 and 79-82, each were indicated in the prior Office action mailed 2/24/2008.

The examiner's amendment to claims 1, 11, 33, 38, 47, 52, 61, 66, 75 and 76 provide further clarification of the hindrance portion having a non-uniform thickness. Therefore, in view of applicant's remarks on pages 25 through 29 in the response filed 07/28/2009, and the examiners amendment set forth herein, all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and all claim rejections indicated in the prior Office action each have been withdrawn.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert J. Sandy whose telephone number is 571-272-7073. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30-4:00).

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Robert J. Sandy/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3677